

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 KINGST 06617 01 OF 02 221943Z  
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01  
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15  
ICA-11 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /081 W  
-----076805 230109Z /75

R 221842Z AUG 78  
FM AMSSY KINGSTON  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2988  
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN  
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY NASSAU  
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KINGSTON 6617

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, EI  
SUBJECT: RULING PARTY PROPOSES CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

1. SUMMARY: THE GOVERNING PARTY HAS CIRCULATED PROPOSED  
SWEEPING CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES WHICH INCLUDE, INTER ALIA:

-- A REPUBLIC, OUT WITH THE QUEEN;  
-- A VERY STRONG EXECUTIVE PRESIDENT WHO WOULD CONTROL  
EVERYTHING AND HAVE THE POWER OF COMPULSIVE ACQUISITION  
OF PRODUCTIVE PROPERTY;  
-- A BILL OF ECONOMIC RIGHTS.

THE OPPOSITION HAS NOT OFFICIALLY REACTED, BUT CAN BE  
EXPECTED TO OPPOSE THE MOVE FIERCELY. IT WOULD, IN EFFECT,  
IF PASSED GO A LONG WAY TOWARD PERPETUATING MANLEY AND HIS  
PARTY IN POWER, AND WOULD ALLOW EXPROPRIATION (DEAR TO THE  
HEART OF LEFT WINGERS) WITHOUT RECOURSE TO THE COURTS.  
THE CHANCES WOULD NOT BE GOOD FOR SUCH A PROPOSAL TO  
ACTUALLY GET TWO-THIRDS IN A FAIR REFERENDUM, AS REQUIRED.  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 KINGST 06617 01 OF 02 221943Z

HOWEVER, BALLOT STUFFING IS COMMON HERE. FOR THE TIME  
BEING IT APPEARS THAT FLOATING THE PROPOSALS HAS, AT LEAST,  
SUCCEEDED IN DELAYING ANY CONSIDERATION OF ELECTORAL REFORM.  
END SUMMARY.

2. WE HAVE OBTAINED A COPY OF THE RULING PEOPLES NATIONAL  
PARTY (PNP) LONG-AWAITED PROPOSALS FOR AMENDING THE JAMAICAN

CONSTITUTION. THE "INFORMAL AND PRELIMINARY" DRAFT PAPER HAS BEEN SUBMITTED IN CONFIDENCE TO THE OPPOSITION JAMAICA LABOR PARTY (JLP) AND IS LEAKING IN BITS AND PIECES TO THE MEDIA. ITS MAIN POINTS:

-- ESTABLISH A REPUBLIC, AND BREAK THE LINK TO THE UK MONARCHY;

-- A STRONG PRESIDENTIAL EXECUTIVE CONTROLLING ALL HERETOFORE CHECKS AND BALANCES, E.G. THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE TO THE PRESIDENT AND ALL FUNCTIONING "IMPARTIAL" COMMISSIONS WOULD BE PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTEES, ALBEIT WITH PARLIAMENTARY CONFIRMATION.

-- A UNICAMERAL LEGISLATURE, WITH CONSTITUENCY MEMBERS PLUS A NATIONAL PANEL ELECTED ON A PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION SYSTEM. EACH VOTE FOR A "PARTY" CANDIDATE IN A CONSTITUENCY WOULD AUTOMATICALLY TRANSFER AS A VOTE FOR THE PARTY'S PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE AND NATIONAL SLATE.

-- STATED CONSTITUTIONAL "RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS" TO INCLUDE: (A) THE RIGHT TO WORK, TO SHELTER, TO SOCIAL SECURITY, TO EDUCATION, TO HEALTH CARE, TO LEGAL AID, AND (B) EQUALITY OF WOMEN IN ALL AREAS OF LIFE.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 KINGST 06617 01 OF 02 221943Z

-- THE PARLIAMENT AND EXECUTIVE WOULD HAVE THE POWER OF "COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF PRODUCTIVE PROPERTY" AND WOULD DETERMINE COMPENSATION. THE COURTS WOULD HAVE NO ROLE IN THIS PROCESS.

-- THE CONSTITUTION COULD BE AMENDED BY A SIMPLE MAJORITY REFERENDUM (AS OPPOSED TO THE PRESENT 2/3 REQUIREMENT).

-- "THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM AND ELECTORAL COMMISSION SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE CONSTITUTION. THE DETAILS OF THIS ARE WELL KNOWN." (NO OTHER MENTION IN THE PAPER OF ELECTORAL REFORM).

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 KINGST 06617 02 OF 02 221950Z  
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01  
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15  
ICA-11 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /081 W  
-----076850 230109Z /75

R 221842Z AUG 78  
FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2989  
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN  
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY NASSAU  
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 KINGSTON 6617

3. COMMENT: THE PROPOSALS ARE SWEEPING AND ARE BEING  
TAKEN BY THE JLP AND INDEPENDENT JOURNALISTS AS A BLATANT  
ATTEMPT TO PERPETUATE THE PNP  
AND MANLEY IN POWER, SOMEWHAT ON THE GUYANA MODEL. ON  
THE SURFACE IT IS ALL QUITE DEMOCRATIC, BUT UPON EXAMIN-  
ATION THE PROPOSALS TAKE AWAY MANY CHECKS AND BALANCES IN  
THE PRESENT CONSTITUTION AND WOULD CONSTITUTE ALMOST TOTAL  
PRESIDENTIAL POWER, ONLY CHECKED BY RECURRENT ELECTIONS.  
SEVERAL JLP SOURCES HAVE COMMENTED THAT WITH SUCH POWER,  
AND GIVEN JAMAICA'S RECENT HISTORY OF ELECTORAL CORRUPTION,  
THERE WOULD BE NO WAY TO PREVENT THE PRESIDENT FROM  
MANIPULATING ELECTIONS AND CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDA.

4. THE TIMING OF THESE PROPOSALS SEEMS TO BE A COUNTER TO  
THE JLP DEMAND, WITH MOUNTING PUBLIC SUPPORT, FOR ELEC-  
TORAL REFORM. THE PNP HAS ACCEPTED THE IDEA OF ELECTORAL  
REFORM, BUT ONLY AS PART OF A TOTAL CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM  
--THUS THE PACKAGE. THERE IS APPARENTLY NOT MUCH CHANCE  
UNDER THE PRESENT CONSTITUTION TO PUSH THROUGH THE PNP  
PACKAGE -- IT WOULD REQUIRE 2/3 IN A REFERENDUM. SOME SAY  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 KINGST 06617 02 OF 02 221950Z

THIS COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED BY BLATANT BALLOT STUFFING, BUT  
WE DO NOT BELIEVE THE JLP LACKS SUFFICIENT RESOURCES TO  
PREVENT SUCH AN OUTCOME. HOWEVER, THE FLOATING OF THE  
PACKAGE, HOWEVER SERIOUSLY INTENDED BY MANLEY AND THE PNP,  
HAS THE EFFECT OF CONFUSING AND POSTPONING ALL CONSTITUTIONAL  
CHANGES, INCLUDING THE CRUCIAL ELECTORAL REFORM AS A PRE-  
REQUISITE FOR ANY OTHER CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES. TWO KEY

JLP LEADERS TOLD US THIS WEEK THAT IF THE JLP'S STRATEGY OF AROUSING PUBLIC OPINION FOR ELECTORAL REFORM DOES NOT WORK, IT IS PREPARED TO ESCALATE, WHICH COULD MEAN INDUSTRIAL ACTION (THE JLP-ALLIED TRADE UNION CONTROLS THE DOCKS AND MOST TRANSPORT) OR EVEN OUTRIGHT VIOLENCE "WITH THE GUN". PRESSURES OF VARIOUS TYPES ARE BUILDING IN JAMAICA, AND THIS CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUE IS BECOMING THE PUBLIC AND OUTWARD MANIFESTATION OF MUCH SUBTERRANEAN BITTERNESS AND INFIGHTING.

5. THE LAST COMMENT MUST ADDRESS THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THESE PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES REPRESENT AN ESCALATION OF MANLEY'S PASSION FOR POWER, AND PERHAPS ALSO SOME KING OF ATTEMPT TO DE FACTO END DEMOCRACY IN JAMAICA, AS THE JLP CLAIMS. ALSO, WHERE DOES "SOCIALISM" FIT INTO THIS PACKAGE? WE FIND INTERESTING THE INCLUSION OF AN "ECONOMIC" BILL OF RIGHTS, DISREGARDING SUCH TRADITIONAL FREEDOMS OF PRESS, ASSEMBLY, RELIGION, ETC. ALSO INTERESTING, AND SOMEWHAT OMINOUS, IS THE PROVISION FOR COMPULSIVE ACQUISITION OF "PRODUCTIVE PROPERTY". THIS CLAUSE IS NOT EXACTLY HELPFUL TO WHAT AT LEAST PART OF THE MANLEY GOVERNMENT IS TRYING TO DO, I.E. IMPROVE THE INVESTMENT CLIMATE. SUCH AN ATTITUDE WILL ALSO FURTHER COMPLICATE THE DISCUSSION ON A NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER. THE OTHER QUESTION, POWER, ALSO SEEMS RATHER STRONGLY BROUGHT OUT IN THE DRAFT. ASSUMING MANLEY AS PRESIDENT UNDER THIS PROPOSED CONSTITUTION, HIS MANDATE WOULD GIVE

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 KINGST 06617 02 OF 02 221950Z

ABSOLUTE CONTROL OF ALL AFFAIRS, THOUGH IT WOULD BE ONE OR TWO STEPS AWAY FROM DICTATORSHIP. GIVEN THE PROPENSITY FOR ELECTORAL HANKY-PANKY -- BY BOTH PARTIES -- IT IS FAIRLY OBVIOUS THAT THE PARTY IN POWER WOULD HAVE ALL THE CHIPS UNDER THE PROPOSED SYSTEM. THUS, THE FORMAT SEEMS DESIGNED TO CATER TO MANLEY'S PASSION FOR POWER. THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY UNDER SUCH A SYSTEM WOULD BE SHAKY. THE PROPOSAL SOFT-PEDALS "SOCIALISM" AS SUCH BUT INCLUDES EASY EXPROPRIATION.

IRVING

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** RULING PARTY, CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 22 aug 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1978KINGST06617  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
**Film Number:** D780343-1172  
**Format:** TEL  
**From:** KINGSTON  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1978/newtext/t19780838/aaaabfqe.tel  
**Line Count:** 212  
**Litigation Code IDs:**  
**Litigation Codes:**  
**Litigation History:**  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Message ID:** cc7d635f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Office:** ACTION ARA  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 4  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Retention:** 0  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 01 jul 2005  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**SAS ID:** 1663584  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** RULING PARTY PROPOSES CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES  
**TAGS:** PINT, PGOV, EI, JM  
**To:** STATE BRIDGETOWN  
**Type:** TE  
**vdkgvwkey:** odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS\_Docs/cc7d635f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014